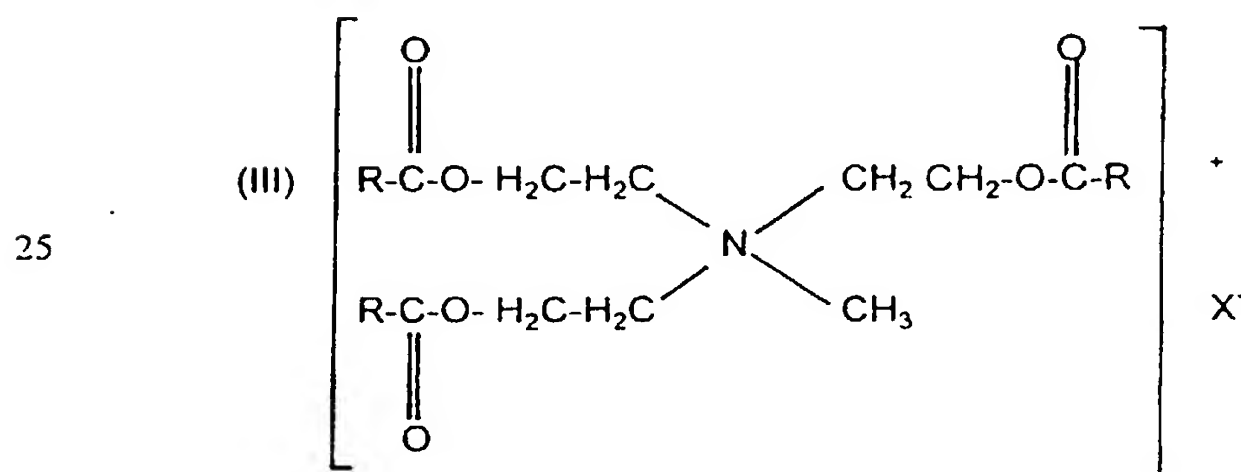
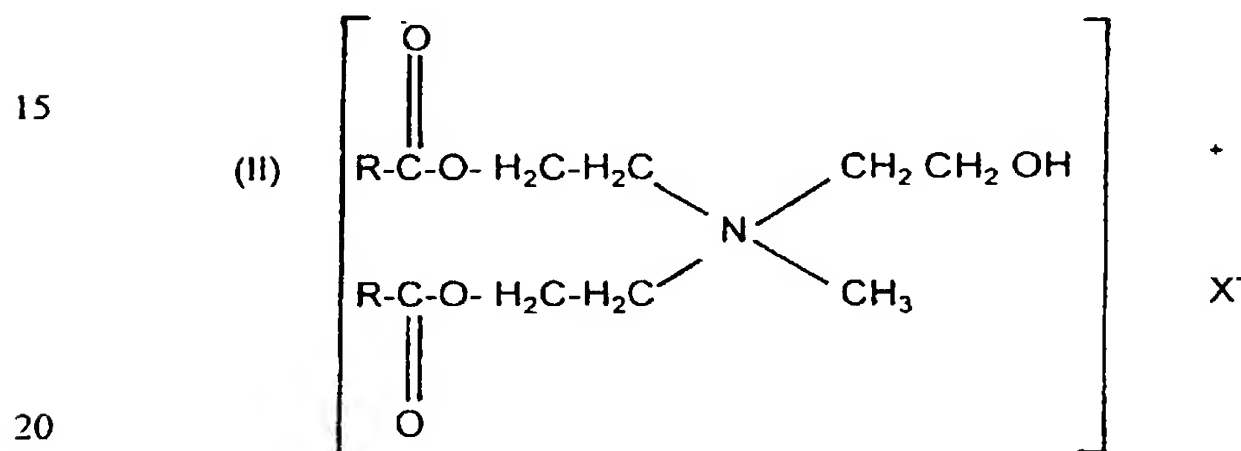
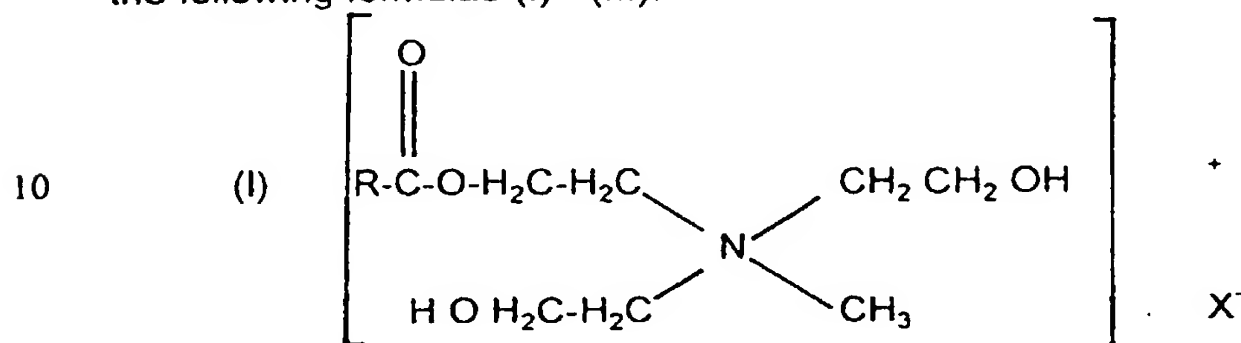


We claim:

1. A textile softening composition with improved stability and softening  
 5 performance which comprises a fabric softening effective amount of a  
 quaternary ammonium salt having mono-, di-, and tri-ester components of  
 the following formulae (I) - (III):



wherein each R can be the same or different and is represented by a substituted or unsubstituted hydrocarbon radical having from 12-22 carbon atoms and an Iodine Value of from about 20 to about 90, wherein said diester component (II) comprises greater than about 55 wt% and the triester  
5 component (III) comprises less than about 25 wt% based on the total amount of the quaternary ammonium salt.

2. The softener composition of claim 1 wherein the cis/trans isomer ratio of said quaternary ammonium salt is the range of from about 80/20 to 95/5.

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3. The softener composition of claim 1 wherein the cis/trans ratio is greater than 90/10.

4. The softener composition of claim 1 wherein said quaternary  
15 ammonium salt comprises 3 -50% by weight based on the total weight of the composition.

5. The composition of claim 1 wherein said quaternary ammonium salt comprises greater than about 55 wt% diester component (II) and less than  
20 about 20 wt% triester (III) component.

6. The composition of claim 1 wherein said quaternary ammonium salt comprises greater than about 60 wt% diester component (II) and less than about 15 wt% triester (III) component.

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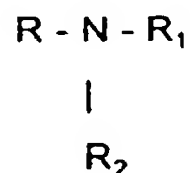
7. The composition of claim 1 wherein said R groups represent a hydrocarbon radical having from 16 to 22 carbon atoms and an Iodine value from about 30 to about 60.

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8. The composition of claim 1 wherein said R groups represent a hydrocarbon radical having from 16 to 22 carbon atoms and an Iodine value from about 45 to about 55.

5 9. A process for the preparation of a quaternary ammonium salt which comprises reacting, at a temperature of from about 170°C to 210°C:

- 10 I) a C<sub>12</sub> - C<sub>22</sub> substituted or unsubstituted fatty acid or mixture of fatty acids having an Iodine Value of from about 20 to about 90, and having less than about 20% trans double bonds, with
- II) an alkanolamine of the formula:



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wherein R, R<sub>1</sub> and R<sub>2</sub> are independently selected from C<sub>2</sub> - C<sub>4</sub> hydroxyalkyl groups, wherein the molar ratio of said fatty acid to alkanol amine is from about 1.6 - 1.8, and wherein said reaction temperature is increased from about 70°C to a range of from about 170° to 210°C, wherein the rate of temperature increase is maintained within a range of from about 0.8°C to 3°C per minute in order to obtain an ester composition with greater than about 55 wt% diester component and less than about 25 wt% triester component, and quaternizing same in order to obtain to quaternary ammonium salt.

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10. The process of Claim 9 wherein the temperature of the reaction is increased at a rate of 1.25° - 3°C per minute from a starting temperature of 70°C up a temperature of from about 170°C to 210°C.

11. The process of claim 9 wherein said fatty acid is a substituted or unsubstituted C<sub>16</sub> - C<sub>22</sub> fatty acid having an iodine value of from about 30 to 60.
- 5 12. The process of claim 9 wherein said fatty acid is a substituted or unsubstituted C<sub>16</sub> - C<sub>22</sub> fatty acid having an iodine value of from about 45 to 55.
- 10 13. The process of claim 11 wherein said fatty acid is derived from tallow, soy, palm, palm kernel, rape seed, lard or mixtures thereof.
14. The process of claim 11 wherein said fatty acid is derived from partially hydrogenated tallow, soy, palm, palm kernel, rape seed, lard or mixtures thereof.
- 15 15. The process of claim 9 wherein said alkanolamine is selected from the group consisting of triethanolamine, propanol diethanolamine, ethanol diisopropanolamine, triisopropanol amine and mixtures thereof.
- 20 16. The process of claim 9 wherein the molar ratio of fatty acid to alkanol amine is about 1.7.
17. The process of claim 9 wherein said fatty acid has less than about 10% trans isomer.
- 25 18. The process of claim 9 wherein the alkylating agent is selected from the group consisting of methyl chloride, benzyl chloride, diethyl sulfate, dimethyl carbonate, trimethyl phosphate, dimethyl sulfate or mixtures thereof.

19. The process of claim 9 wherein a solvent is not employed.
20. The process of claim 9 wherein a solvent is employed.
- 5 21. The process of claim 20 wherein said solvent is selected from the group consisting of  $C_1 - C_6$  alcohols, glycol, fatty acid, mono-, di-, or tri-glycerides, and mixtures thereof.
- 10 22. A quaternary ammonium salt which comprises mono-, di-, and tri-ester components wherein said quaternary ammonium salt comprises greater than about 55% diester component and less than about 25% triester component, and wherein said quaternary ammonium salt is the reaction product of:
- 15 A) an ester which is the reaction product of a substituted or unsubstituted  $C_{16} - C_{22}$  fatty acid having an iodine value of from about 40 to about 60 and having less than about 20% trans isomer and a trialkanolamine wherein said molar ratio of fatty acid: trialkanolamine is from about 1.6 - 1.8
- 20 with
- B) an alkylating agent.
23. The quaternary ammonium salt of claim 22 wherein said fatty acid is derived from tallow, soy, palm, palm kernel, rape seed, lard and mixtures
- 25 thereof.
24. The quaternary ammonium salt of claim 23 wherein said fatty acid is derived from partially hardened tallow, soy, palm, palm kernel, rape seed, lard and mixtures thereof.

25. The quaternary ammonium salt of claim 22 wherein said alkanolamine is selected from the group consisting of triethanolamine, propanol diethanolamine, ethanol diisopropanolamine, triisopropanol amine and  
5 mixtures thereof.

26. The quaternary ammonium salt of claim 22 wherein said alkylating agent is selected from the group consisting of methyl chloride, diethyl sulfate, benzyl chloride, trimethyl phosphate, dimethyl carbonate, dimethyl  
10 sulfate or mixtures thereof.

27. The quaternary ammonium salt of claim 22 wherein the molar ratio of said fatty acid and said alkanolamine is from about 1.7.

15 28. The quaternary ammonium salt of claim 22 which comprises greater than about 60 wt% diester component and less than about 15 wt% triester component.

20 29. A quaternary ammonium salt derived from reaction of a fatty acid and an alkanolamine which comprises mono-, di-, and tri-ester components of the following formulae (I) - (III):

